

Reformed Land: Extent of Use and Contribution to Livelihoods in the Waterberg District

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Abstract : Three tier land reform programme (land restitution, land redistribution and land tenure reform) had been implemented for the past two decades in South Africa with an aim of redressing the unjust land ownership patterns of the past. Land restitution and redistribution sought to make land available for beneficiaries' ownership based on policy guidelines. Attention given to the two sub-programmes was mostly land reform focused with the quantity of land that exchanged ownership being used as a measure of success with disregard for how the land is used by the beneficiaries for their livelihoods. In few cases that the land use assessment was done for the two sub-programmes it was assessed on a case basis or few selected cases. The current study intended to shed light on a broader scope. This study investigated the extent to which land reform farms were used and contribution made by farms to the livelihoods of active beneficiaries. Seventy six farms that represented restitution (16 farms) and redistribution (60) programmes were selected for land use investigation. Land use data were collected from farm representatives by means of semi-structured questionnaire. A stratified sample of 87 households (38 for restitution and 49 for redistribution) were selected for livelihood investigations. Data on income generating activities and passive income sources were collected from household heads using semi-structured questionnaire. Additional data were collected through focus group discussions and from stakeholders through key-informants interviews. Livestock production used more land per farm on average (45%) in relation to the amount of average total land used per farm of 77% under land redistribution programme. Land restitution transformed crop farms into mixed farming and unused farms to be under use while land redistribution converted conservation land into agricultural land and also unused farms to be used. Livestock production contributed on average 25% to the livelihoods of 48% of the households whereas crop production contributed 31% on average to the livelihoods of 67% of the households. Government grants had the highest contribution of 54% on average and contributed to most households (72%). Agriculture was the sole source of livelihoods to only three per cent of the households. Most households (40%) had a mix of three livelihoods sources as their livelihood strategy. It could be concluded that the use of reformed land would be mainly influenced by the agro-ecological conditions of the area and agriculture could not be the main source of livelihoods for households that benefited from land reform. Land reform policies which accommodate diverse livelihoods activities could contribute to sustainable livelihoods.

Keywords : active beneficiaries, households, land reform, land use, livelihoods

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